

Day 1 - Panel 3: “Enhancing migrants’ agency and contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”

Name: Aimilia Tikoudi

Thank you moderator for the floor and panelists for such a great discussion. My name is Aimilia Tikoudi. I am a young woman from Greece, and I am talking as a youth representative on behalf of the **UN Major Group for Children and Youth**. My professional capacity relates to asylum procedures in Greece. Today, I will be drawing in particular from my experience in youth policies and youth programmes, focused on non-formal education, for the past 7 years.

I have worked on numerous non-formal projects in Greece, such as European Unions’ non-formal education initiatives, and also in Mexico, the Caribbean, Turkey, Norway and Scotland. Also, I have been part of the formation of youth policies in **global events like the Colombo Declaration on Youth Policies or the Baku Commitment at the first Youth Forum on Youth Policies, and have interacted with youth** communities in more than 80 countries.

To give you a feel of what kind of non formal education I’m talking about and what its potential to help young people and migrants become agents of change in their communities, I have worked in a EU-funded projects that promote the exchange good practices between youth workers for instance, to work with media tools for conflict transformation and peace-building in conflict-affected communities, or to include socially marginalized communities in nature conservation in disaster-prone areas so that they both integrate and generate income, or projects that supported youth with drug addictions to work in sectors like tourism and rural youth to build their own social enterprises. This is very effective as it creates young agents and gives them the tools to become agile and socially innovative in times of change and crisis, going beyond plain capacity building, training and reskilling.

When talking about how to promote migrants’ ability to realize their indispensable role as agents of change, non-formal education plays a crucial role. Through its experiential dimension, it is unique in its contribution to building competences for youth to become critical thinkers, entrepreneurs, humanitarians and world citizens and in promoting values for social cohesion and resilience for post-crisis recovery and re-development, where soft skills and agility are vital. Non-formal education shall be recognized for being an open-source for communities in situations of crisis, and be included in migration and development policies. It can set the ground for structured, reflective dialogue on mainstreaming youth migrants in the post-2015 development Agenda as it translates into local realities.

I’d like to share a couple of success factors to ensure this is effective. First, pay attention to the heterogeneity of migrants, and ensure that they are not targeted / siloed for this, but that the training is inclusive of host communities too - this will also aid social integration and create allies. Second, invest and partner with already existing programmes and projects, as there are already very effective ones at place.

Thank you.